

The Orders of Family

Table of Duties, Husbands, Wives, Fathers, Children

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Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

When God institutes His holy orders they are part of His creation for the most part. The holy vocation of preacher and hearer are vocations that arise from the nature of the Gospel as a message. The other orders are embedded in the creation. In other words the holy orders that God establishes are just the way that things are. This is true because God is the creator. There is a certain way that He creates. When He creates things are the way that He creates them to be.

While it is difficult to see how the government and her citizens are simply the way that things are, they are. The government is part of the creation sent by God to give good order. The citizen is a vocation sent by God which submits to the government in order to produce such good order.

It is easier to see how the vocations of family are part of the creation. There are several holy orders in the family. First is the holy order of husbands. Second is the holy order of wives. Third is the holy order of fathers. Fourth is the holy order of children. And since God commands children to honor both their father and their mother it is safe to assume that the holy order of father is assisted in its duties by the holy order of mother.

God instituted these vocations. He instituted them in the creation. He instituted them in the beginning.

Let us begin with husbands and wives.

The holy order of husband and the holy order of wife are in the creation itself. God made them male and female. By making them male and female He made them for sexual union. Therefore God made them to become husbands and wives. While there will always be exceptions to this and God grants those exceptions in the Scriptures for the most part people are created to be husbands and wives. Upon taking wedding vows one enters into these vocations and assumes the duties of the holy orders.

Because these holy orders are part of the creation "gay marriage" is something that does not exist. It is not part of the male and female creation that God made in the beginning. It is therefore outside of the creation. It is outside of the holy orders of husband and wife. It does not exist. God did not create it. God created a man to be physically united to a woman. God created a woman to be physically united to a man. The state is outside of its vocation to attempt to alter the creation according to a modern standard of measure.

Husbands here are your orders from your creator according to the holy order of husband. You are to dwell together with your wives. You do not dwell separately from them. You are to acknowledge that they are heirs together with you of the salvation that our Lord Jesus Christ has provided us. You are not to believe that you are superior to them in the matters of salvation. You inherit as a son of God through faith in Christ Jesus. Your wife also inherits as a son of God through faith in Christ Jesus. The reason that we are sons is because of Christ Jesus and not because we are men or women.

Secondly, the reason that you dwell together with your wives is so that your prayers may not be hindered. This means that husbands are called to pray together with their wives. It is a husband's responsibility to establish regular Bible reading and prayer in the home. If you are a husband and you have not already done this then you are sinning against your vocation until you do establish regular Bible reading and prayer together with your wife.

Finally, men, you are to love your wives.

Men do not need love. We really don't. We don't care that much about love. We men are much more interested in expectations. Most men would rather their wife just tell them what to do and they would do it than to love them. But that is not what God commands. God commands you to love them.

The reason that God commands you to love them is because that is what God has created women to receive. Women exist in a state of love. While there are some exceptions most women want love and give love as naturally as they breathe. God has created them in this fashion because He knows that because of their biology which He also created women will spend more of their time nurturing children. Because women will spend more of their time nurturing children, He created them to love automatically. Women automatically nurture and care for others. It makes them great mothers.

But that means fellas that they are not going to feel close to their husbands unless their husbands love them. God is commanding you to show your wives the same nurture and love that they show to others. He is commanding you to take the time to figure out how they want to be loved and to love them that way. In order to do this you will have to listen to your wife very carefully understanding that she may have difficulty expressing to you how she feels, not because women are not good at talking about their feelings, but that they are accustomed to talking about their feelings with other women. It may be difficult for her to make it plain to you. But find it out. Love her. Simply love her.

And in doing so, husbands, you will behave contrary to your nature. Your nature is one of respect and expectations and rules. Love demands that on occasion rules be set aside. Love demands that forgiveness be administered. This is not in a man's make up which means that in order to love your wife, you will have to give up yourself to her. But isn't that the greatest love, to give up oneself for another?

The holy order of wife also has its responsibilities.

Wives are called to be subject to their husbands. Later in the book of Ephesians God will use the word respect. That means that when He says that wives are to be subject to their husbands He means that they are to respect their husbands.

Typically men and women in our society object to this commandment from the Lord. I could stand here and ask you who you think you are to object to the word of the Lord, but if I did the objection would remain. The objection arises from a notion that has arisen in Western Civilization since the Age of Reason. The idea is that all people are essentially the same. Our American Declaration of Independence states it this way: We hold these truths to be self evident: that all men are created equal and are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights. The Declaration goes on to enumerate those rights.

When the Declaration says, "all men" what it is shooting for is "all people." Therefore in one form or another Western Civilization has adopted the notion that everyone is equal. We all have equal vote when voting for public officials. We all feel that everyone has equal say to comment on public affairs as long as they have knowledge of those affairs.

Such egalitarian notions spill over into people's thinking about the creation. If that is the case then men and women are essentially the same. They are interchangeable. In our civilization it began with giving women the right to vote. If a woman is interchangeable with a man, then she can vote along with a man. She has the ability to have knowledge regarding the issues surrounding the election. From there it passed on to the workplace. Women are interchangeable with men the thinking goes. A woman can do what a man does and women are quick to point out that they can often do the job better. Our civilization is now working on getting women equal pay in the workplace.

The problem with this line of reasoning is twofold. First of all, this line of reasoning does not arise from women themselves. The notion that women are the same as men and are interchangeable with men is a man's idea. White European male philosophers came up with the philosophical presuppositions

that undergird such thinking. This could be why when women's suffrage was under debate in our country in the early 1900s many women opposed it.

The second and more important part of the problem is that men and women are not created interchangeable. God did not create men and women the same. Therefore He did not create them to perform the same tasks.

Let me just put forth one example. Women have more connections between the hemispheres of their brains than do men. This allows women to compute multiple factors in a given situation in order to draw a conclusion. In our experience we popularly call this "women's intuition". They can see a situation and draw a conclusion faster and more accurately and with less information than can a man. Men for their part can do simple straightforward tasks in a determined fashion over a long period of time. This makes women great at doing complex tasks and makes men great at doing straightforward tasks that require long term commitment to repetition. That is just the way that we are. I would submit that it makes a woman good at raising children. Every ounce of her intuition is necessary for her to do that task and do it well. Since that task is basic to human society it renders men virtually useless. What are you going to do with them?

Well, you may as well let them be in charge of public society. Somebody has to run things while the women are raising the children. And someone has to be expendable. The men may as well be. They are less vital to the raising of children than a woman is. Let men go and risk themselves outside of the home. Let them run government and go to war. Let them die in combat. Women are too precious for that.

What I say may be controversial in our day but even modern science in study after study shows that given a choice the majority of women would prefer to stay at home, raise children, and be married to a man who is worth respecting, someone who takes charge of the home and provides security for her and for her children. Study after study has shown that all men want in exchange for all of this is sex. At least men are easy to understand.

Modern egalitarianism rejects this idea, but it is part of the creation. More and more women today are reading their Bibles and finding relief in it. They are relieved of the burden of having to pretend to be a man and are granted the gift of what God created them to be, the one who loves and nurtures her family.

Put simply just as women crave love, men crave respect. What we want from our wives is respect. We do not want to be mocked or made fun of. We men can make fun of each other, but you wives cannot make fun of us. The most important person in the world to a husband is his wife. He wants her respect more than he wants anyone else's respect. And since God has created men to desire this, He commands women to provide it. And just as a man will have to sacrifice himself in order to love his wife a woman will have to sacrifice herself and her natural tendencies in order to respect her husband. But then what greater love is there than that one sacrifice oneself for another?

Then from husband and wife spring the holy orders of father and mother. The holy orders of father and mother presuppose the holy orders of husband and wife. In other words it is not in keeping with God's creation that a person be a father before he is a husband or that a person be a mother before she is a wife. God has created children such that they thrive best in a family of their own parents one a mother and one a father. Can God raise children in other homes? Sure He can. There are always exceptions, but that does not mean that He has created us to be raised in other kinds of homes. He has created us to grow up in a home with a father and a mother. We thrive best in such an environment. So when contemplating divorce, ask yourself what is best for your children and do not blindly believe it is a peaceful home even if the parents are divorced. Children need both of their parents. They need them

together. Remember the holy order of husband requires the husband to live together with his wife. That means that the father of the children lives together with their mother.

And so the requirement that God places upon fathers is that they do not provoke their children to anger and that they raise their children in the training and admonition of the Lord.

Therefore it is forbidden for you to make it your goal to make your children mad at you. Your children may become angry with you in their own sinfulness as they rebel against your instruction of them in the ways of the Lord. That is not your responsibility. It is however a sin to selfishly provoke your children to anger. In other words it is contrary to the command of God for you to make them angry for any other reason than raising them in the training and instruction of the Lord. Consider your actions before you commit them. God forbids you to make them mad.

At the same time God commands fathers to instruct their children in His ways. That means a bunch of things. Fathers are to instruct their children in the will of God. They are to instruct their children in the Ten Commandments and how they apply to their child's daily life at any given age. Father's are to instruct their children on the difference between right and wrong. Fathers are forbidden from using their own standards of right and wrong. They are to use God's standards of right and wrong. In other words you are forbidden from raising your children in the training and admonition of you. You are to raise them in the training and admonition of the Lord. The Lord's Word governs how a father teaches his children. That means that in addition to teaching your children the difference between right and wrong, you are to teach them that wrong things are sins. You are to teach them about the wrath of God against sin. You are to teach them to repent of their sins. You are to teach them to turn to Jesus for forgiveness. You are to teach them about Jesus and everything that He has done to accomplish their salvation. You are to teach them that Jesus died for them, that Jesus rose from the dead for them, that Jesus will raise them from the dead, and they will live together with Him in eternity because of His death and resurrection. In order to do this you will need to teach your children the Scriptures. You will need to bring your children to Divine Service. You will need to be educated in the Scriptures yourselves. If you do not know where to start, Dr. Luther has provided you a great starting place, the Small Catechism. Incorporate the catechism into your daily devotions with your children so that they begin to learn the words of the Scriptures and how it is that their heavenly Father thinks. Read to them from the Bible. Make sure they are prepared to examine themselves for the eating of Christ's body and the drinking of His blood. In this way you will teach your son or your daughter to believe in Jesus. To believe in Jesus is salvation. Therefore you will be teaching your child salvation in Christ Jesus. You do want them in eternity with you, don't you?

To that end children are commanded to honor their father and their mother. Since God commands you to honor both we can assume that mother assists father in raising the children in the Lord's training and admonition.

God grants parents supreme authority over their children. He grants them this authority so that they can do what He has called them to do. They cannot raise their children in the Lord's training and admonition unless the Lord gives them the authority to do so. When God commands children to honor their father and their mother, He is giving the parents the necessary authority to raise their children in His training and admonition.

In the family the way that God has constituted it, the parents do all of the work and the children receive the benefit of their labor. That is why God gives parents the authority over the children so that the children may be raised right as the parents serve their children.

The result as far as children are concerned is that they live a long time on earth. A child who respects his father's word not to play in the street is going to live a lot longer than a child who spurns his

father's word and plays in the street anyway. A teen who honors his father's word not to drive while intoxicated or to take illegal substances will live a lot longer than a child who spurns his father's word and drives drunk anyway or uses illegal substances anyway. One of the greatest regrets of my life was not honoring my father on earth while he was commanding me in the way of the Lord. The regret that I face is a life that has been lived with significantly less joy in it than had I listened to my father on earth. And it was not because Dad imposed some kind of punishment on me. It was simply that Dad told me the word of the Lord and I did not want to listen and I paid for it and am paying for it. A child who listens to his father's instructions regarding sexual purity will live longer than the child who spurns his father's instruction. And a child who listens to His father's instructions about Jesus Christ will live forever.

And woe to the child who does not have a father or a mother who instructs him.

These are the holy orders of the family.

The holy orders of the family demonstrate that God has orders outside of the individual and the state. Modern thinking which permeates our civilization tends to think about only two things when it comes to authority: the individual and the government. Listen carefully to our political discourse in the United States and you will realize that with only a few notable exceptions this is true. That is not how God made the world. God did not make humans to relate to each other only through the government. What a bland world that would be. God created us to live in families. God created us to be fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, sons and daughters. Within these families is a separate estate from the government. Within these families the grace of God is most needed and most active. Within these families God has instituted the necessary institutions to pass on faith in Jesus Christ to the next generation that they too along with us may be saved from God's wrath.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.